

## Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBOE-00 /011 W

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R 141025Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9105

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 5353

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, ABLD, SY

SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF CONSULAR SECTION AND NEED FOR ADDITIONAL  
STORAGE SPACE

REF: DAMASCUS 5217

1. OWING TO DRAMATIC INCREASE IN CONSULAR WORKLOAD AS RESULT  
OF CLOSURE BEIRUT CONSULAR SECTION, AND AUGMENTATION OF  
DAMASCUS CONSULAR SECTION BY 5 TDY PERSONNEL, PHYSICAL FACIL-  
ITIES OF CONSULAR SECTION ARE NOW TOTALLY INADEQUATE. SINCE  
DAMASCUS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE THE PRINCIPAL HANDLING  
POINT FOR LEBANESE CONSULAR APPLICANTS FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE,  
AMBASSADOR HAS DECIDED TO CONVERT ADJOINING  
APARTMENT, PREVIOUSLY USED AS SUPPLY WAREHOUSE (LEASE S-100-  
FBO-31), INTO ADDITIONAL CONSULAR OFFICES AND WAITING ROOM.  
SUPPLIES HAVE BEEN TEMPORARILY RELOCATED IN FOUR AREAS  
THROUGHOUT EMBASSY, BUT MORE AND BETTER SPACE IS REQUIRED  
BEFORE EXPECTED ARRIVAL LARGE SHIPMENT OF EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES  
IN COMING WEEKS.

2. EMBASSY HAS EXPLORED POSSIBILITY OF RENTING WARE-  
HOUSE SPACE ON OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN, BUT WHAT WE HAVE FOUND  
IS POORLY LOCATED, BADLY CONSTRUCTED AND PROHIBITIVELY  
EXPENSIVE. MOST SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO CON-  
VERT SMALL BASEMENT APARTMENT NOT FAR FROM EMBASSY INTO  
SUPPLY ROOM AND WAREHOUSE. APARTMENT WE HAVE IN MIND  
(LEASE S-1001-FBO-8) HAS 114 METERS OF FLOOR SPACE, AND  
ANNUAL RENTAL IS LS 13,000 (U.S. DOLLARS 3333.33). LEASE  
DOES NOT EXPIRE UNTIL JUNE 28, 1981.

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3. THIS APARTMENT, LEASED IN JUNE 1974 WHEN FEW APARTMENTS WERE AVAILABLE, IS CURRENTLY LEAST SUITABLE RESIDENTIAL APARTMENT UNDER EMBASSY LEASE AND HAS BEEN ADVERSE FACTOR ON MORALE OF ALL ITS LONG-TERM OCCUPANTS. IT IS DARK, AWKWARDLY ARRANGED, AND LOCATED DIRECTLY BELOW COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY WHICH OPERATES DAILY UNTIL ABOUT 2300 HOURS. HOWEVER, SINCE ANNUAL RENTAL IS VERY LOW BY CURRENT DAMASCUS STANDARDS, LOWER EVEN THAN COMPARABLE WAREHOUSE SPACE OUTSIDE CITY, EMBASSY PROPOSES CONVERT APARTMENT TO STORAGE SPACE AND LEASE NEW APARTMENT FOR ITS PRESENT OCCUPANT, FSS-7 PHILBERT.

4. EMBASSY NOW ATTEMPTING LOCATE SUITABLE APARTMENT FOR PHILBERT AND WILL REQUEST TELEGRAPHIC ADVICE OF NECESSARY INCREASE IN DAMASCUS PROGRAM ALLOTMENT WHEN WE HAVE DONE SO. ESTIMATED COST WILL BE IN RANGE \$25,000-35,000 FOR CUSTOMARY 2-YEAR RENTAL ADVANCE.  
MURPHY

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 14 AUG 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976DAMASC05353  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760313-0566  
**From:** DAMASCUS  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760853/aaaabtq.tel  
**Line Count:** 79  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 DAMASCUS 5217  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** blochd0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 20 MAR 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <20-Mar-2001 by hughespi>; APPROVED <24 JAN 2005 by blochd0>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EXPANSION OF CONSULAR SECTION AND NEED FOR ADDITIONAL STORAGE SPACE  
**TAGS:** AFSP, ABLD, SY  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006